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Croatia

Food and Agriculture Import Regulations and Standards

Country Report

2002

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Report Highlights:

This is the first report on the rules and regulations covering the import of agricultural and food products.

In anticipation of eventual accession to the European Union, the Government of Croatia is slowly adapting its laws to coincide with EU rules and regulations. Consequently, a law or rule mentioned in this report could in fact change in a short period of time.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Vienna [AU1], HR

FAIRS REPORT

I. FOOD LAWS

Croatian food legislation consists of the following types of laws:

- the law on health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use, and derived regulations;
- the law on normalization and regulations;
- the law on cattle-breeding and regulations;
- the veterinary law and regulations;
- plus old regulations that Croatia adopted from former Yugoslavia.

The Croatian Government is working on new food law that should be in compliance with EU food and labeling legislation. This law should be finished in 2002. Current regulation of food import, labeling and quality standards is complex and confusing, but border inspections are regular and consistent.

Croatian food laws and regulations are valid both for domestic and imported products.

A. Scope of laws and regulations:

1. The law on health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use

(Governmental Gazzette #1 from 1997, NN 1/97) and derived regulation, (regulation on additives that can be found in food products NN 130/98, NN122/2000;

- quantity of pesticides, toxins, mikotoxins, metals, histamines and similar substances which can be found in food products;
- and other conditions connected to health standards of food products, and objects of general use NN 46/94, NN45/98;
- conditions of preservation of food products and objects of general use with ionization radiation NN46/94;
- microbiological standards for food products NN46/94, NN40/2001;
- health standards for dietetic food products NN46/94, NN 50/95, NN 88/96, NN 1/2001, and NN 44/02;
- health standards for objects of general use NN46/94, regulates health standards that food products and objects of general use, domestic or imported, should have before sales. It regulates health control (of food, substances for food production, objects of general use, condiments, additives, and substances for food enrichment) because of consumers' health and safety. This law covers under general objects: cosmetics, cleaning agents, kitchen appliances, wrapping and packaging materials for foods, toys, some objects and things that are in contact with skin or mucous membrane; tobacco and tobacco products.

This law and its regulations prescribe labeling for some product dietetic products, food additives and pesticide or chemical contaminants. It also describes import control procedures and cases when inspectors order the destruction or return of shipment.

2. The law on normalization NN55/96 and derived regulations:

- basic requirements for beverages and mineral water NN23/97;
- basic requirements for coco products, chocolate products, creme products and bonbons NN90/96;
- basic requirements for edible oil, margarines, and similar products, mayonnaise, dips, salads, and other products on basis of oil and fat NN 39/99;
- basic requirements for beer and products similar to beer NN 6/98;
- basic requirements for salt for human consumption NN 15/97;
- basic requirements for natural mineral, spring and table waters NN58/98;
- basic requirements for olive oil NN35/99;
- basic requirements on snack products NN52/97
- basic requirements for the products, processes and services, system of congruence standards with HRN (Croatian Norms), documents that should accompany product in transit and transport and control of the requirements.

The function of this law is to protect consumers; develop the Croatian market; simplify international trade; protect the environment, human and animal health and harmonize products. The law gives general labeling rules and derived regulations proscribe specific labeling of food products. Regulations under this law proscribe quality standards that food products must have and analytical methods of quality product control.

3. The law on cattle-breeding NN 70/97 and derived regulations and ordinances:

- regulate quality of honey and other bee products NN 20/200,
- regulate feed NN 26/98 and
- bans use of certain veterinarian medicines on animals whose meat and products are usee for food NN 4/2002

Among other things this law regulates trade with animals, the quality of animal feed and animal products, for example, honey and honey products quality standards and labeling.

4. The veterinary law NN 70/97 and derived regulations :

- shipment of products of animal origin for which there are no veterinarian or health issues when imported or transhipped thru Republic of Croatia NN 93/98, regulates import, export and transit of shipments with animals, animal products, animal semen, feed, veterinarian drugs and other products for animals;
- vet-health control for aforementioned products and required accompanying documents.

5. Regulations from former Yugoslavia that are still valid regulate quality standards of certain food products:

- quality of alcoholic and non alcoholic drinks, ice and vinegar Sl. List SFRJ 13/57, 53/78, 58/78, 2/82, 34/82,

52/83, 58/83, 16/88, 24/89;

--quality of coffee and coffee surrogates, tea, condiments, baking powder, concentrate for backing, concentrate for pudding, dietetic products and additives Sl. List SFRJ 20/80, 41/80, 45/81, 5/86, 33/89, 39/89,

-- quality of cookies and similar products and there are 21 more regulations and many more amendments.

B. Overview of legislation on specific product and issues:

1.Honey

- (NN 20/2000) quality standards of honey and honey products (bee products), plus conditions under which product must comply with labeling, and quality control.

2. Dietetic foods

- The law on health standards, food products and objects of general use (NN1/97) partially regulates labeling, promotion of products and defines dietetic foods.

-The regulation on health standards of dietetic foods (NN 46/94, NN50/95, NN88/96, NN1/01, and NN44/02) regulates health standards, labeling, consumers and types of dietetic foods (baby food, food without gluten, food with less lactose or without lactose.)

3. Wine legislation

- New wine legislation should go soon in the Sabor (Parliament) procedure. This new legislation should be in compliance with EU legislation. Until then wine laws (NN 34/95) and wine regulation (96/96) are enforce.

4. Hygiene Regulations

- Health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use (NN 1/97) and other regulations.

- Veterinary law (NN 70/97), that deals with animal breeding and slaughtering houses hygiene, cover this subject.

5. Pesticides, Heavy Metals and Mycotoxines

- Quantity of pesticides, toxins, mycotoxines, metals, histamines and similar substances which can be found in food products, and other conditions connected to health standards of food products and objects of general use (NN 46/94, NN45/98) deals with this issue.

6. Packaging Regulations

- The law of measures (NN 11/94) and regulation on measuring demands for packaging (NN23/97) regulates the volume indicated on the label, acceptable tolerances, and test procedures for packaging.
- The law on waste (NN 34/95) and regulation on managing container waste (NN 53/96) regulates disposal of container waste and packaging material.

7. Custom matters are regulated by:

custom law (NN 78/99, NN 117/99, NN 73/00);

one ordinance with amendments (NN144/99, NN 48/00, NN 49/00, NN 77/00) and 4 regulations (NN 147/99) dealing with custom documents and fees.

II. LABELING REQUIREMENTS

(Nutritional Labeling, Biotechnology Labeling, Health Claims, Organic Labeling)

A. General requirements

Normalization Law (NN 55/96) gives general rules on product labeling and minimum requirements for the label. Regulations derived from that law give specific and detailed guidance on what data label must contain.

1. According to the law on normalization the minimum data on the label is as follows:

name of the product
type of product
name and address of producer and importer

In addition most of the following data are required:

name of the product and name under which product is sold
company, that is, name and address of the producer - for imported products
address of importer
net weight of the product in metric units
basic compounds,
additives (type, name and E number) listed in decreasing
order
date of production and expiry date
(different regulations require different ways of writing this data, that is, everything in numbers, month with letters, year stated only with last two digits, etc.)
storage instructions
other information important to the consumer can be added

2. All labels must be in the Croatian using a Latin alphabet.
3. Products are not allowed entry with only a standard US label only; it must have Croatian label. In some special cases products may be imported without a Croatian label but the product can not be sold until trade inspection ensures that Croatian labels were attached to the products.
4. Stick-on labels, meeting local requirements, can be affixed in addition to the standard U.S. label.
5. Imports cannot enter the country with foreign labels.
6. Food samples do not have to be labeled.
7. We are not aware of products sold with U.S. standard labeling.
8. There are no special shelf - life or country - of - origin requirements.
9. Croatian authorities do not grant exception to their labeling regulations.

B. Nutritional Labeling Requirements

-- The law on health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use (NN 1/97) proscribes general rules on labeling, additives, vitamins, minerals, different dietetic products, etc.

-- Regulation of health standards of dietetic food products (NN46/94, NN 50/95, NN 88/96 and NN 1/2001) and nutritional labeling for baby food, food with smaller content of lactose or without it, food without gluten, food with added vitamins, food for medical purposes, food with lower or higher nutritional value, etc.

1. Nutritional labeling is mandatory. Dietetic foods must state: on the label: "dijetetski proizvod".

General information on nutritional labels are as follows:

name and use of product,

name and address of the producer,

expiry date

control number of the producer,

net weight (volume) of product,

content of product in decreasing order (including group of used additives),

chemical content (aminoacides, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates) of product in 100g (100ml) (vitamins and minerals must be in joint group and their content

in product - that can be use in one day - must be stated like percentage of RDA),

type and quantity of compounds that give to the product dietetic trait, energy value of a product in 100g or kcal (kJ) except for products which have very low energy value or where not important.

For product impact, number of meals and amount of meals, instructions for usage and storage. Different types of dietetic food have some extra, compulsory data on the label.

2. Claims such as “light”, “reduced”, etc. are permitted on the package (not on the label) as long it is truthfully proven. Products are checked in laboratories on chemical content.

3. Implied claims such as “you would not believe that something so light could taste so good” are not forbidden by law but are not desired.

4. Health claims are not regulated, but they are not desired.

III. PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS

A. Package size for food products is determined by regulation on measuring requirements for packaging (NN23/97). This regulation prescribes for every package nominal fillings, marking of the quantities, etc.

B. Companies or persons that put food in packages are obligated to collect used packaging, according to the regulation on managing container waste (NN 53/96). The only collecting organization for that purposes, company “Sustav OHO”, is operating in Zagreb and can be hired to do the same job in any part of Croatia. In other towns regulation is not followed and Ministry of Environment is trying to prosecute big companies because of bad waste management, but these cases still wait in the courts.

C. There are no restrictions on packaging material but limitations for each type of packaging material is prescribed by regulation on health standards for objects of general use (NN46/94). That regulation proscribes in details what certain packaging material can consist of. The main request is that packaging material is not influenced by season, chemical or physical characteristic of food.

If the product is in a biodecomposable package Ministry of Health will give certain subsidy for that product.

IV. FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS

A. Additives are regulated by (NN 130/98, NN 122/00) this includes: use of colors, preservatives, antioxidants, emulators, stabilizations, gel makers, ph

controllers, taste increasers, flower treatment, aromatizing, enzymes, and other.

Regulatory authorities do not accept the list of CODEX approved food additives for imported foodstuffs. Importers usually select products that comply with the Croatian list or ensure that the producer's products are in compliance with Croatian additives list.

B. Regulatory authorities developed a positive additive list. The list can be obtained on governmental gazette web page: www.nn.hr but there is no English version of the list.

V. PESTICIDE AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS

A. The maximum content of certain pesticide or residues in foodstuffs is governed by regulation on quantity of pesticides, toxins, mikotoxins, metals, histamines and similar substances which can be found in food products and other conditions connected to health standards of food products and objects of general use (NN 46/94, NN45/98). Pesticides are listed alphabetically with corresponding maximum content for certain foods. This regulation is enforced by municipal and customs sanitary and veterinary inspection.

B. The pesticide residue list is positive, i.e., stating what is permitted, versus, what isn't permitted.

C. According to plant protection law (NN 10/94), all pesticides must be registered. The registration office is as follows:

Zavod za zastitu bilja
Svetisimunska c. 25
10 000 Zagreb
tell./fax 00385-1-2346040
00385-1-2346043

VI. OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Food products do not have to be registrated for import in Croatia, but they have to comply with food-quality standards prescribed with Croatian laws and regulations.

B. All shipments that contain food will go to sanitary inspection, that is, they will be randomly tested for quality and health standards.

C. Product samples shipped via express mail and food for fairs are treated like any other import, so they will be tested for quality and health standards.

D. At the retail and wholesale level food storage and foods are inspected on a basis of plan for that year or if an event requires it.

E. Standard import documents are not proscribed, but sanitary inspector has right to ask for additional information from producer or certificates from competent institutions of country of export, for example, producers specification, certificate of origin, certificate of compliance with certain regulation, etc.

VII. OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS

A. Consumers Packaging or municipal waste disposal, see section III, item 2.

B. Only metric weights and measures are accepted.

C. Fortification on foods with vitamins and minerals is permitted. In this case labeling should be carried out according to the regulation of health standards of dietetic food products (NN46/94, NN 50/95, NN 88/96 and NN 1/2001). Content of vitamins and minerals can be maximum 3 RDA and for vitamin A and D not more than RDA.

D. Genetically modified organisms (GMO) and food produced from them is not yet regulated with permanent law. Republic of Croatia has a temporary ban (interim law) for import of GMO food. It is applied only to bulk products (soybeans, etc.). Croatia is working on a biotechnology and food law, which should be in accordance with similar food laws in European Union. That legislation should be finished by the end of this calendar year.

E. Dietetic or special use foods go under regulation of health standards of dietetic food products (NN46/94, NN 50/95, NN 88/96, NN 1/2001, and NN 44/02), see section II B

F. Food sanitation: Allowed chemical preservatives are listed in regulation on additives that can be found in food products (NN 130/98, NN122/2000). Certain food can be preserved with ionizing radiation according to regulation from NN 46/94.

G. Marine products: regulation about quality of fish, crabs, sea-urchin, shells, frogs, snails, turtles, and their products, from ex Yugoslavia governmental gazette sl. List SFRJ, num. 46/91.

H. Animal quarantine: For live animals import, animals should pass quarantine. Municipal veterinarian inspector is approving barn/stable/voliere, on basis of regulation on quarantine (NN 52/91, NN 64/91). New regulation on quarantine (still not enforced) will prescribe catalogue of approved barns/stables for quarantine.
(Do we have a list of quarantine diseases so APHIS can provide a certificate stating if the animals are free from the diseases?)

I. Wine is regulated by law on wine (NN 34/95), and regulation on wine (NN 96/96) - it will be changed this year; beer is regulated by regulation on basic requirements for beer and similar products (NN 6/98), and quality of alcoholic drinks with regulation on

quality of alcoholic drinks from ex Yugoslavia governmental gazette sl. List SFRJ num.16/88 and 63/88.

J. Organic products:

Regulation on labeling organic products (NN 13/02)

Label must contain:

name of the product,

date of production,

name and address of producer or importer and number from the list of the producers of eco agricultural and food products,

country of origin,

list of compounds in decreasing order,

net weight,

the word: "eco product" ("ekoproizvod"),

name of inspection service,

unique number of acknowledgement,

other data in compliance with special regulations.

K. Product samples and mail order shipments are treated like any other import.

VIII. COPYRIGHT AND/OR TRADE MARK LAWS

A. Trade marks and brand names are legally protected in Croatia with laws that are in compliance with EU legislative.

B. Companies interested in the registration of trademarks or brand names have to apply at the State Intellectual Property Office (open from 9:00 to 14:00 hours) where all information and application forms are available. If company wants to contact lawyer for assistance first, the State Intellectual Property Office has a list of legal representatives. The address and telephone numbers of State Intellectual Property Office follows:

Drzavni zavod za intelektualno vlasnistvo

Ulica grada Vukovara 78

10 000 Zagreb

Croatia

Switchboard: tell. 00385-1-6106111

For trademark and brand name: tell. 00385-1-6106404

For copyright: tell. 00385-1-6106104

IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES

A. Incoming goods go to the custom storage at transport terminals or airports. After goods arrive to the custom storage, importer in person or freight forwarder should start procedures for checking and clearing goods, which includes special documents that should be sent to the Inspection Departments and the Custom. Procedure starts with Sanitary Inspection Department from Ministry of Health which checks all products that are coming in contact with people except meat, which is checked by Veterinary Inspection Department from Ministry of Agriculture. Samples for quality checking are taken every time that import is conducted. If border inspector (sanitary or veterinary) trusts importer, on basis of regular import, than products are inspected only periodically (every three mounts). Product examination has to be paid by importer. If products are of suspicious quality their sales will be banned until analyses is conducted and proven otherwise. Custom clearance and removal from storage is carried out under the supervision of a custom officer who compares the documents with the commodities after they were checked by sanitary or veterinary inspector for ingredients and quality.

Documents needed for meat import can be found at:

[http:// www.veterinarstvo.hr/import/index.htm](http://www.veterinarstvo.hr/import/index.htm)

Custom rates and documents for imports can be found at:

<http://www.carina.hr>

(As this web site is in Croatian only for clarification, contact your Croatian partner or one of freight forwarding companies to determine the proper rates.)

B. Custom import documents should be in Croatian, but documents in English language are accepted.

C. Average length of custom clearance for food products, if all documents are in order, is one day.

D. If product is rejected on the custom there is a possibility of appeal. Possibility that product is rejected by importer should be controlled in contract between exporter and importer, and than if the case has a standing point in the contract certain issue can be brought to court, but Croatian legal system is slow and inefficient.

APPENDIX I.

GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS

Control over the products that are regulated by the laws on cattle-breeding (NN 70/97) and veterinary law (NN 70/97) and regulations (see Ia):

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Grada Vukovara 78
10000 Zagreb
tel. 00385(0)1 6106111
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109201
e-mail: office@mps.hr
web page: www.mps.hr

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Grada Vukovara 78
10000 Zagreb
Animal Health Protection and Veterinary Practice Department
Vlatka Vrdoljak Muheljcic
tel. 00385(0)1 6106
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109207
e-mail: office@mps.hr
web page: www.mps.hr

Control over the products that are regulated by the law on health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use (NN 1/97) and regulations (see Ia):

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Health
Deputy Minister for Economy
Ksaver 200a
10 000 Zagreb
tel. 00385(0)1 4607512
tel./fax. 00385(0)1 4677076
web page: www.tel.hr/mzrh

Control over the law on normalization (NN55/96) and regulations (see Ia):

State Office for Standardization and Metrology
Ulica grada Vukovara 78
10 000 Zagreb
PhD. Divjak
tel. 00385 (0)1 6106215
fax. 00385(0)1 6109324
e-mail: pisarnica@dznm.hr
web page: www.dznm.hr

Control over general trade legislation:

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Economy
Grada Vukovara 78
10000 Zagreb
tel. 00385(0)1 6106111
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109110
e-mail: info@mingo.hr
web page: www.mingo.hr

Control over laws dealing with waste disposal:

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Environment
Ulica Republike Austrije 20
10 000 Zagreb
tel. 00385(0)1 3782444
web page: www.vlada.hr/min-grad.html

Useful contact for all general advice on food trade in Croatia:

Croatian Chamber of Economy (Commerce)
Agriculture, Food Industry and Forestry Department
Rooseveltova trg 2
P.O. Box 630
10000 Zagreb
tel. 00385 (0)1 4826066
00385 (0)1 4826068
fax. 00385 (0)1 4561545
e-mail: poljoprivreda@hgk.hr
web page: www.hgk.hr

**APENDIX II.
OTHER IMPORT SPECIALIST CONTACTS**

State inspection services that have control over food samples and their testing:

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Grada Vukovara 78
10000 Zagreb
Border Veterinary Inspection Department
tel. 00385(0)1 6106663
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109207
e-mail: ivan.susac@mps.hr
web page: www.mps.hr

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Grada Vukovara 78
10000 Zagreb
Veterinary Inspection Department
tel. 00385(0)1 6106660
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109207
e-mail: agaspar@mps.hr
web page: www.mps.hr

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Health
Sanitary Inspection
Ksaver 200a
10 000 Zagreb
tel. 00385(0)1 4607525
tel./fax. 00385(0)1 4677076
web page: www.tel.hr/mzrh

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Environment
Ulica Republike Austrije 20
10 000 Zagreb
Environment Protection Department
tel. 00385(0)1 6106556
fax. 00385(0)1 6118388
web page: www.vlada.hr/min-grad.html

Information source for reports on Croatia and other countries is found at:

www.fas.usda.gov

For questions regarding other issues not covered in this report, please contact:

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